



THE PEOPLES WAY



The Peoples Way: Second Construction Season

For those who have traveled US 93 over the years, construction on the highway between Evaro to Polson was a welcome sight last summer. Three projects got underway, one at the Jocko River Bridge north of Arlee, and two in the Polson area including one that extended onto MT 35.

The two projects near Polson are all but completed with a finishing chip-seal left to be done. Completion of the Jocko River Bridge is expected by the end of this year.

With these first projects on the ground, the uniqueness of this highway reconstruction is readily apparent, from the architecture and landscaping of the Polson wall at the Junction of US 93 and MT 35, to the stone detail on the facade of the Jocko Bridge. These enhancements are not just about aesthetics but reflect the collective vision of the Montana Department of Transportation, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation and the Federal Highway Administration.

The result of a 20-plus year, on again and off again negotiation process, the design of this road not only addresses safety and capacity concerns, but also respects the Spirit of Place — the surrounding mountains, plains, hills, forest, valley, sky and paths of waters, glaciers, winds, plants, animals and native peoples.

Moving Forward

In January, two more projects were let to contract, one north of the Jocko River Bridge and the other for structures at Mud Creek south of Pablo. Two more projects were let in April, spanning north and south of Ravalli. In all, over 18 miles of this 56.3-mile corridor will be under construction this summer.

Contract incentives encourage an aggressive construction schedule so the cor-

ridor can be completed quickly, accelerating improvements and minimizing construction impacts to the public.

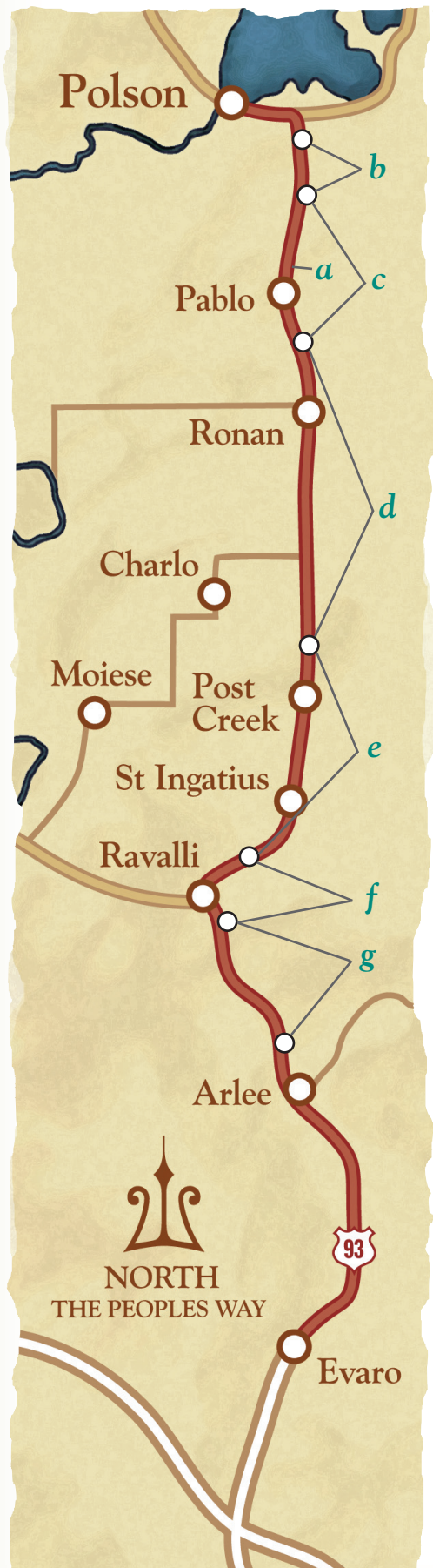
End of the Road

In the end, this corridor, The Peoples Way, will be among the most context-sensitive highway projects in the Nation. It will not only reflect the Spirit of Place, but will allow the rebirth of native grasses, plants, and shrubs along the corridor; the protection of all wildlife living in the Flathead Nation; and the safety of visitors and residents who pass through this land.

Want more information?

For up-to-date information on what's going on with construction and more information on the project, visit www.93info.com or www.thepeoplesway.com.

To sign up for future newsletters, please register your e-mail on the Web site.



2006 CONSTRUCTION

Spring marks the beginning of a new season for six U.S. 93 projects that are scheduled to be under construction this summer along the Peoples Way:

a) Mud Creek Structures

includes construction of two bridges at Mud Creek. This is the first phase of a two-phase project. The bridges being constructed will also act as wildlife crossings. The anticipated completion is by fall of 2007. (Riverside Construction, (406) 726-2112)

b) Minesinger Trail to MT 35

includes the Polson wall, over-look, bike and pedestrian trails the 4-lane roadway. This project is scheduled for chip sealing, this summer.

c) Ninepipe area north of St. Ignatius to north of Ronan

continues to undergo a Supplemental Environment Impact Statement that is expected to be available for public review and comment this summer.

d) Medicine Tree to Red Horn Road

a 5.4-mile project, includes a new bridge over Mission Creek, construction of primarily 2-lane roadway with alternating passing lanes for north and southbound traffic, wildlife crossings and significant wetland and riparian work. Completion is scheduled for this fall. (Schellinger Construction, (406) 745-0166)

e) South of Ravalli to Medicine Tree

a 4.7-mile project will primarily be 2-lane roadway with alternating passing lanes for north and southbound traffic, improvements of bike and pedestrian trails and wildlife crossings. This project includes a new scenic overlook and future visitor center at the top of Ravalli Hill. (M.A. DeAtley, (800) 597-7163)

f) White Coyote Road to the south end of Ravalli

a 6.7-mile project, is in progress, with occasional traffic delays, detours and width restrictions. Expect night construction. Construction will primarily be 2-lane roadway with alternating north and southbound passing lanes and wildlife crossings. Completion is scheduled for this fall. (Riverside Construction, (406) 726-2112)

g) North end of Arlee to White Coyote Road

will continue with the completion of the Jocko River Bridge, 2-lane roadway and alternating passing lanes for north and southbound traffic. This project includes several wildlife crossings and significant wetland and riparian work in the Jocko River vicinity. Construction of this project is scheduled for completion by years end. (Frontier West Construction)

Holiday Construction Schedule

MDT is committed to keeping delays to a minimum and will stop construction work during the following:

ARLEE FESTIVAL:

Stop work Thursday,
June 29 at 5:30 p.m.
Resume work Thursday,
July 6 at 8:00 a.m.

LABOR DAY:

If construction continues:
Stop work by Friday,
Sept. 1 at 12:00 p.m.
Resume work Tuesday,
Sept. 5 at 8:00 a.m.

For your safety and the safety of others, please obey posted speed limits and signs at all times in construction zones. Even when crews are not present, roadway conditions in these zones are not in a condition for travel at normal highway speeds.

BEHIND THE SCENES

As travelers venture down U.S. 93 from Evaro to Polson in the next few years, construction will be clearly evident, but not all work going into the project is so obvious. The Salish Kootenai College is currently salvaging over 70 native plant species from the construction corridor that typically do not survive reconstruction.

During plant dormancy, late winter and early spring, a team averaging six members carefully salvages native plants. The plants are taken to the college nursery where they remain until they are replanted. The nursery program at the college began this past March and is maintained by students, volunteers and college staff members who salvage the plants and nurture them as they grow.

"Everyone kind of pitched in," said Dawn Thomas, the native plant nursery manager, regarding the number of tribal organizations that make the salvage program possible.

According to both Thomas and Virgil Dupuis, the extension program director at the college, working at the nursery is a 24-hour, seven day-a-week job.

At the nursery, the majority of the plants typically are no larger than one foot in height. There are rows of tiny junipers, willows and, sitting in kiddie pools used as large plant pots, panic grass flourishes. Within the nursery compound there are two green houses, a shade house and water troughs that hold wetland plant species.

According to Thomas, the salvaged plants are kept at the nursery for two weeks to two years. The time frame depends on the plant's maturity and when a construction site is ready for replanting.

Dupuis said they are hoping for a 100 percent survival rate, taking on the responsibility that if a plant does not survive, the nursery will replace

it. Nursery staff is not only salvaging existing plants, but they are also collecting local, native plant seeds, which is "specialized, tedious work," said Dupuis.

Crews began collecting seeds three years ago in order for some plants to grow to certain height specifications. While in some areas, seeds and smaller plants have a higher survival rate than larger plants; plants selected for relocation near wildlife crossings must be larger

because they act as shelter for wildlife. There is less chance that wildlife will trample and kill the larger plants.

Joanne Bigcrane, from the native plant nursery believes salvage and propagating from local seed source is a great approach to keeping native plants within their natural habitat.

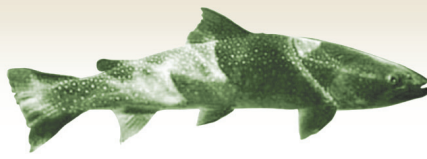
"It's an opportunity to work together and do a reconstruction project differently," Bigcrane said. "Tribal philosophy is about the environment, it's about the plants, the animals, the trees, and even the rocks."

Doing a bit more takes extra effort.

This is just one way the three gov-

ernments are working together to deliver a context sensitive strategy that not only improves road safety, but also incorporates the natural landscape.





SUMMER EVENTS

June 19-23, Vanderberg Camp: Hosted by the Peoples Center, this is a traditional cultural experience. Activities will include setting up and taking down a tepee, cedar bark bags, flutes, bows, dancing and drumming, Native games, reservation tour and a hike to Sleeping Woman Peak. Cost per person is \$1,300. Enrollment is limited to 25. Call 675-0160 for more information.

June 23-25, Sobriety Camp-Out: A celebration at the Arlee powwow grounds, events include speakers, a sobriety fun run, and games. A dinner is planned for 7 p.m. June 24. For more information, call Gene Sorrell at 676-5080.

June 29 – July 4, The 108th Arlee 4th of July Celebration: Friday, at 1 p.m. the first grand entry of dancers will begin at the Celebration Grounds. Saturday, competition will begin for the singing and dancing contests. Grand entries will be held 1-7 p.m. throughout the weekend. For more information, contact 745-4984



July 13 - July, Standing Arrow Powwow in Elmo: This is an Indian social gathering featuring drumming, dancing and traditional dress and food.

Travel Safety Tips

- **Plan Ahead** – When making travel plans, research construction zones, and allow for extra travel time. Travelers can visit www.mdt.mt.gov for US 93, The Peoples Way construction information and for Statewide Road Conditions, or you can dial 511 or (800) 226-7623 I (800) 335-7592 (TTY).
- **Always Follow Signs and Obey Road Crew Flaggers** – Also, maintain a safe distance between your vehicle, construction crews and equipment.
- **Be Alert** – Not everyone is well versed in construction zone driving etiquette, so pay extra attention to your surroundings while in these areas. Expect the unexpected!
- **Remain Calm and Patient** – Keep up with the flow of traffic and posted speed limits to minimize delays, but never allow speeding and impatient drivers to modify the way you drive. Obey posted speed limits and don't tailgate!
- **Give Large Trucks Extra Room** – Because of the length and weight of commercial trucks, they need more room to stop or change lanes, especially in the narrow lanes construction zones often create.
- **Nighttime Construction** –
 - Nighttime construction occurs between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., Sunday through Friday on the Peoples Way. Daytime construction will continue as normal, Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
 - Take extra precautions when traveling through construction zones at night. Remember to always keep your headlights on, even when your car is stopped.

Nationally, there is one work zone fatality every 8.5 hours and one work zone crash every 13 minutes. That means three people die and 13 others are injured every day due to unsafe driving in work zones.

Remember, construction-zone speed limits apply regardless of the presence of workers, and
Fines are Doubled, so SLOW DOWN! Buckle Up, and Drive Safely.